Pollution by Soil excavation by Brick Kilns

182. SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that excavation of soil and manufacture of kiln bricks out of such soil causes environmental pollution, loss of flora and fauna and is harmful to bio-diversity;

(b) whether it is also a fact that soil being excavated for manufacture of kiln bricks is a valuable commodity and, if unchecked, can, in future, become a scarce commodity; and

(c) what measures have been initiated and proposed, to remedy the ill-effects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) In order to conserve top soil, the Government has made it mandatory *vide* its Notification dated 14.9.1999 for brick manufacturers, located within 50 kms from any coal or lignite based Thermal Power Plant, to use at least 25 per cent of fly-ash, bottom ash or pond ash, with soil, on weight to weight basis, for manufacture of clay bricks, tiles or blocks used for construction activities. Every coal or lignite based Thermal Power Plant is required to make available as free of cost for at least ten years, for manufacturing ash based products such as cement, concrete blocks, bricks or any other material or for construction of roads, embankments, dams, dykes or for any other construction activity.

Neglect of Lions in Gir Forest

183. SHRI YADLAPATI VANKAT RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Gir forest officials are neglecting lions in the park;

(b) if not, the reasons for increase in lion deaths in the past four years; and